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**Florida House of Representatives Completes
2012 Legislative Session**

Passes Balanced Budget Focused on Education and Economic Development

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Florida House of Representatives adjourned the 2012 legislative session today after passing a balanced budget that includes more than \$1 billion in new funding for K-12 education, over \$2 billion in reserves and addresses a more than \$1 billion shortfall without raising taxes.

“By fulfilling our constitutional responsibility to pass a balanced budget, holding the line on taxes and ensuring that the next generation of Floridians is prepared to compete and lead in a global economy, we are sending a signal of stability and predictability to Florida’s private sector job creators,” said House Speaker Dean Cannon (R-Winter Park).

“Facing a more than \$1 billion shortfall, this session we passed a balanced budget without raising taxes, increased K-12 education funding by more than \$1 billion and set aside more than \$2 billion in reserves,” said House Appropriations Chairman Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring). “The House also passed critical tax relief and incentive packages to support existing and attract new private sector jobs.”

Highlights of the 2012 Legislative Session:

- **Tax Relief Package (HB 7087):** HB 7087 is comprised of measures related to economic development. This tax package combines several of the Governor Rick Scott’s economic development proposals with bills sponsored by House members. The package includes a measure that doubles Florida’s income tax exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and incentivizes the growth of reliable industry jobs, such as manufacturing.
- **Economic Development Incentives (HB 7069):** HB 7069 provides measures to stimulate job growth and support the economic development of current and potential Florida businesses. This package provides tax refunds to businesses that create high-wage jobs in specific targeted industries through the Qualified Targeted Industries program and the Qualified Defense Contractor and Space Flight Business Tax Refund program.
- **New Academic and Research Excellence Standards for State Universities (HB 7129):** HB 7129 establishes a collaborative partnership between the Florida Board of Governors and the Legislature to elevate academic and research excellence and national preeminence of the highest-performing state research universities by creating a system of

standards. If signed into law, universities that meet specified standards would be able to establish student tuition and fees at differentiated and market rates.

- **Support for Current and Former Military Personnel (HB 977):** HB 977 bill addresses many facets of military support, and contains provisions that expand tax and financial incentives for current and former military service members, provide for the recognition of veterans and strengthen Florida's commitment to retaining existing military installations within the state.
- **Tools to Combat Human Trafficking (HB 7049):** HB 7049 helps to strengthen Florida's human trafficking laws and stiffen penalties for anyone involved in human trafficking. Presently, most trafficking cases in Florida are brought in federal court under the federal law – with substantial assistance provided by Florida law enforcement agencies. Under the bill, jurisdiction on these multi-jurisdictional cases of human trafficking would be granted to the Statewide Prosecutor.
- **Personal Injury Protection reform (HB 119):** HB 119 reforms Florida's Personal Injury Protection law to address major cost drivers in the current No-Fault motor vehicle insurance system. It makes meaningful changes in attacking fraud, controlling overutilization, focusing on promptly treating people for their serious injuries and reducing litigation costs.
- **Unemployment Compensation (HB 7027):** HB 7027 reduces the increase in unemployment compensation taxes facing Florida businesses by reducing the wage base for calculating the unemployment tax and extending the recoupment period for the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund. Together, the changes will save businesses \$800 million over three years.

Highlights of the 2012-2013 General Appropriations Act:

Total Budget: \$70.0 billion

- General Revenue Funds \$24.8 billion
- State Trust Funds \$20.4 billion
- Federal Funds \$24.9 billion

PreK-12 Education

- **Increase of \$1.1 billion dollars:** Total budget of \$12.8 billion.
- **Voluntary Prekindergarten:** \$413.3 million, an increase of \$28.7 million, or 7.46%, for an expected additional 11,555 students.
- **Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP):** Total funds are increased by \$1.07 billion or 12.59%, from \$16.6 billion to \$17.2 billion.
- The funds per student are increased 2.41% from \$6,224.92 to \$6,375.18 which is \$150.26 per student.
- The Reading Instruction allocation is increased 33.1%.
- The Virtual Education Contribution is increased 71.04%.

- School Recognition funds are increased 12.53% to provide an increase in the amount of award from \$70 up to \$100 per student.

Transportation and Economic Development

- \$9.9 billion budget which maintains both our economic development activities and our state's transportation infrastructure.
- Safety and security were preserved: no loss of sworn law enforcement officers (FHP)
- \$1.8M for Guard Tuition Assistance and \$13.5M for Armories.
- Continues the transition of providing driver license issuance services at tax collector's offices. This saves the state an additional \$1.4M next year.
- Economic Development programs are funded at \$223.2 million or approximately 13% more than last year. Within these resources, \$96.2M is provided to the Governor with flexibility so he can best utilize economic incentives to take advantage of emerging trends and opportunities that promote job growth and business opportunities around the state.
- Visit Florida's total budget has been increased by \$27.5M to \$54M next year to promote our state's vital tourism industry through increased marketing and advertising.
- Maintains level funding for State Aid to Libraries (\$21.3M), and increased cultural and museum funding by 178% with \$6.95M. Historic preservation grant programs were funded with an additional \$4.1M.

Health Care

- **Medicaid Price Level and Workload Adjustment** – \$304.7 M total, \$856.8 M GR – No category of Medicaid eligibility is eliminated or reduced. Additional funding is provided for increased Medicaid caseloads and price level adjustments. Also provides \$47.3 M GR for FY 2011-12 Medicaid Deficit.
- **Florida Kid Care Enrollment Increase** – \$4.6 M total, (\$6.2 M GR) – Provides funding to fund the 2012-13 anticipated growth in the Kidcare Program. Funding is expected to serve an additional 11,612 children, a 4% growth rate.
- **Funding for Additional Elder Waiver Slots** – \$28.9 M total, \$12.8 M GR – Funding to provide an additional 2,838 slots in Elder Waiver Programs.
- **Restoration of Nonrecurring Funds in the Department of Children and Families - \$64.0 M total, \$47.96 M GR**
 - \$2.0 million Healthy Families Program
 - \$6.9 million children's substance abuse services
 - \$8.1 million community adult substance abuse services
 - \$3.6 million children's mental health services
 - \$24.3 million community adult mental health services
 - \$3.0 million County Criminal Justice Grants (adult community adult mental health services)
 - \$16.0 million maintenance adoption subsidies

- **Biomedical Research Funding—\$25 M Biomedical Research Trust Fund and \$5M General Revenue (nonrecurring)**—Provides biomedical research funding to James and Esther King (\$5 million), Bankhead/Coley (\$5 million), H. Lee Moffitt (\$5 million), Sylvester Cancer Center (\$7.5 million), and Shands Cancer Hospital (\$7.5 million).

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- **BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill \$6.1 million**—Provides authority to spend funds from BP to conduct food safety testing and a high-visibility seafood marketing campaign.
- **Everglades Restoration \$35 million total, \$15 million GR**—Provides funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (\$30 million) and the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Program (\$5 million).
- **Florida Forever \$8.4 million TF**—Provides funding for the purchase of West Aucilla River Buffer to provide hunting access for hunters with disabilities as identified by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- **Beach Restoration \$21.8 million total; \$11.9 million GR**—Provides funding for financial assistance to local and state governments and special taxing authorities for beach and dune restoration.
- **School Food & Nutrition Program \$1.1 billion total; \$16 million GR**—Transfers funding from the Department of Education for the school food and nutrition programs.

Government Operations

- **One-Stop Business Registration Portal** - \$3.0 million for DOR to establish and implement an Internet website that will provide individuals and businesses with a single point-of entry into state government for completing and submitting of documents required to transact business in Florida.
- **Fiscally Constrained Counties** - \$26.3 million – this issue provides funding for counties to off-set the reductions in ad valorem tax revenue as a result of State Constitutional Amendments approved by voters in 2008.
- **Single Licensing System** - \$1.9 million to update the department’s licensing system. The licensing system has not had a major software update since it was created in 2003. The manufacturer of the software will soon eliminate support.

Higher Education

- Establishes the Florida Virtual Campus to provide access to online student and library support services and serve as a statewide resource and clearinghouse for postsecondary education distance learning courses and degree programs and to increase student access and completion of degrees.
- Establishes a Degree Completion Pilot Program to recruit, recover, and retain adult learners and assist them in completing degrees aligned to high-wage, high-skill, and workforce needs.
- Budget authority for the State University System for tuition increased by \$244 million.
- With tuition revenues generated by the 15 percent tuition differential fee and other tuition adjustments, the State University System budget decreases by only 1.1 percent.

- Florida College System – Funding is increased by 3.8 percent from the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The authorized tuition increase generates \$45.5 million for the Florida College System.
- Authorizes a 5% percent tuition increase for Workforce Education programs, which generates approximately \$2.0 million for Workforce Education.

Justice

- No changes in adult sentencing or release policies to ensure continued public safety.
- Redirects mortgage foreclosure revenues from the State Courts Revenue Trust Fund to the General Revenue Fund. This will offset deficits in the trust fund and provide stable funds to support and operate the State Courts System.
- Provides funding to support the continuing backlog in foreclosure cases.
- No reductions to the State Attorneys, Public Defenders, Guardian Ad Litem, Capital Collateral Regional Counsels or the Regional Conflict Counsels.

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